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Hac D. C. Wetland
from
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me

It is fortunate that he did for in its original state it more clearly reflects his pensive mood. He graciously consented to publishing his unedited account for the first time.

"I SAW THE PRESIDENT ASSASSINATED"

The morning of November 22, 1963 started out to be cold and raining a dark day. I made detail at 6:45 A. M. along with many other officers. I had escorted President Kennedy in 1961 when he came to Dallas to visit with Mr. Sam Rayburn who was in Baylor Hospital in serious condition. That day when we got back to Love Field Mr. Kennedy shook my hand and thanked me for the escort. This time I was hoping that I could ~~escort~~⁷ the President again but I thought I would probably have to work a corner instead. In Detail I was assigned to ride on the right hand side and slightly to the rear of the Presidential Limousine. The original plan was to have two officers ride on the left of the car and two on the right of the car.

These officers were to ride one behind the other to keep any one from getting to near the President but he did not want this so we were changed so as to ride side by side at the rear bumper of the car which was only slightly behind the President.

We rode our motorcycles out of the garage that morning in the rain. We were required to be on our assignments at Ten that morning. The planes were due to land at about Eleven Thirty. I got to Love Field at a little after Nine and it had about quit raining. By Ten it was beganing to clear off.

The planes landed at about Eleven Thirty Five. There were three of them the first two carried the Staff, White House Press and other dignitaries. The third plane was Air Force One which carried the President.

We lined up our motorcycle escort preparing for the departure. The motorcade was to be led by Chief ~~Smith~~ Love who was to be about six blocks ahead followed by Sergeant Blair with two motor jockeys who were to be about three blocks ahead then Sergeant Blair with four jockeys one block ahead, then Chief Curry only a few feet ahead of the President's car. I was riding beside Jim Chaney on the right side of the President's Limousine. Sergeant Blair and four other jockeys were bringing up the rear behind the Secret Service car.

There was hundreds of people standing on the curbs as we came out of Love Field it was to be this way all the way to the Market Hall. These people would walk out

into the street as the first motorcycles went by so Chief Curry told them over the radio to fall back to about 50 feet ahead of his car. On Lemmon Avenue 4900 block near Loma Alto some people on the right hand curb were holding a long sign said "JFK and LBJ stop and shake our hands." Mr. Kennedy had his driver stop and he told these people to come on and they walked up to his car and did shake his hand. I saw people start to run toward the stopped car from as far as a block ahead of us. Jim Chaney called by radio to Chief Curry and he started backing up toward the Presidential car Sergeant Bliss and the four Jockeys turned around and started toward us the Secret Service men dismounted and ran to the car and started moving the people away then we started moving again. Chief Bliss called Chief Curry and told him the crowd was extra heavy at Turtle Creek and Lemmon and he replied "That's all right we'll take care of it we have a good motorcycle escort." Sergeant Bliss and his four got the crowd pushed back and we proceeded with out to much interference. The closer we got to downtown the heavier the crowd got and the more they would walk out toward the President. If one of them got pretty close a secret service man would leave his car and get on back of the presidential car so he could be close enough to Mr. Kennedy to protect him.

We traveled west on Cedar Springs to Harwood then south on Harwood to Main Street without to much trouble with the crowd but as we traveled west on Main the crowd was

heaviest of all and they wouldn't back up. Several times my right handle bar and right hand hit people in the stomach because they weren't watching me they were only looking at the president. Along about Akard Street the crowd was so heavy and they would not back up so rather than bump them I slacked back and was riding directly behind Jim Chaney. A young man ran out of the crowd from behind me and ran past me on my left which put him between me and the Presidential Limousine as he ran by me I saw that he was carrying a small camera already placed to his eye but he didn't get to take the close up picture of the President because one of the Secret Service men caught him just in front of my motor and bodily threw him between me and Jim Chaney into the crowd. The last glance I got of the crowd there were people still falling. About this time I saw ahead of me standing in the street a lady holding an umbrella, the type that had a long metal piece on the tip I rode up beside Jim Chaney forcing people to back up but this lady didn't right then. An Agent left his car and got on the rear of the Presidential car. I rode closer and closer to her forcing her back into the crowd. After we passed her the Agent went back to his car.

We traveled west on Main then turned north on Houston Street without too much trouble with the crowd then we turned west onto Elm Street. Drove only a short way traveling very slowly. About that time I heard what I thought was a car back fire and I looked around and then to the President's car in time for the next explosion

and saw Mr. Connally jerk back to his right and it seemed that he look right at me I could see a shocked expression on his face and I thought "Someone is shooting at them" I began stopping my motor and looking I looked straight ahead first at the Railroad overpass saw only one Police-man standing on the track directly over the street I looked then back to my right and behind me then looked back toward Mr. Kennedy and saw him hit in the head he appeared to have been hit just above the right ear. The top of his head flew off away from me. Mrs. Kennedy pulled him toward her. Mrs. Connally pulled Mr. Connally down and she slid down in the seat. I knew that the shooting was coming from my right rear and I looked back that way but I never did look up. Looking back to the front again I saw the Secret Service Agent lying down across the car over Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy the Presidential limousine was beginning to pick up speed and Secret Service men were running past the presidential car drawing there guns as they ran. I said to Jim Chaney "Let's go with them" and we sped away he pulled past the President's car and up toward Chief Curry's car. Chief Curry came on the radio and notified the Dispatcher that a shooting had accured that we were in route to Parkland Code three and to notify them to stand by. As we were traveling north on Stemmons Freeway Agent Hill raised up looked over toward me and shook his head from side to side and held up his

hand thumb down. He knew at that time as I did that the President of the United States was dead or dying.

We were driving at a high rate of speed the people along to shoulder of the freeway not knowing what had taken place were trying to get a closer look at the President and would run into the street in front of us. A very dangerous thing to do. After we passed Market Hall we had no trouble with pedestrian traffic but the automobile traffic was heavy. It seemed like an eternity but we finally got to Parkland Hospital.

I got off my motor stepped over to the Presidential Limousine. An Agent opened the car door and started to get Mr. Kennedy out but Mrs. Kennedy said no. It's no need she said and raised up from over Mr. Kennedy. I could see the top of his head was gone, his left eye was bulged out of socket. The agent said "Oh no!" and started crying pulled his coat off and placed it over Mr. Kennedy's head. I saw someone rolling a stretcher up and I said "Let's get Mr. Johnson out then;" thinking that Mr. Connally was Mr. Johnson; reached in the car and got ahold of him under his arms some other officers got a hold of Mr. Connally and we laid him on the stretcher and he was taken inside. I looked back to Mr. Kennedy as Mrs. Kennedy said "All right but I'm going with him." I reached in and got ahold of him at his shoulders and helped lay him on a stretcher. I stepped back and some agents started pushing Mr. Kennedy into the hospital Mrs. Kennedy walked beside the stretcher. As we got to the door to the emergency room

an agent told me to take up a post here and not to let anybody but doctors and nurses in.

Some woman and a small boy walked up and asked "Is it true that the President was shot" and I said yes. "How bad is he hurt" she said and I said "I don't know Mam and if I did I could not tell you."

Mr. Pokey Wright a retired Deputy Chief of Police walked up and told me to clear the Hallway and I along with some Secret Service agents asked everybody to leave the hallway and did get it cleared out.

This was the first chance I had to relax a little bit and I lit a cigarette I noticed I had blood on my hands looked and I had blood on my left sleeve, down the left side of my riding breeches and on the outside of my left boot. I supposed I got this on me as I helped get Mr. Kennedy out of the car.

A man walked up and wanted to go into the Emergency Room. I asked him who he was and he said he was Justice of the Peace _____. I told him he could not go in because there was probably nothing he could do. He said Ok then he went on. Later the Hospital Administrator came out looking for "this J. P.", I told him I turned him back and he said "Turned him back man he own's the body" and I replied "What Body" and he said "I guess you are right," If you see him again we need him to authorize the removal of the Body." This was the first official word I had

that the President was dead. Officer L. C. Gray walked up and asked me if I had heard about Officer Tippet I said no and he told me that Officer Tippet had stopped a suspect and was killed and that they were looking for this suspect in Oak Cliff.

Mrs. Cabell walked up and asked if Mr. Cabell was in the Emergency Room and asked me to ask him if he wanted her to come in. I went inside to ask him and before I could say anything he said "Does your radio work" I said yes and he said come on and we went to my motorcycle as we passed his wife in the hallway he told her that he would be right back. We got to my motor he told me to call the dispatcher and have them to get a Justice of the Peace to the hospital in a hurry. I did and we went back inside he went back into the Emergency Room and an Agent got me by the arm and told me he had information that the airplane had been moved wanted me to find out where it was and arrange for an escort back to Love Field. I liked to never found a phone in that hospital that wasn't busy. One line had already been hooked up direct to Washington. I finally got a line and called the dispatcher's office. I told him who I was and that I understood the airplanes had been moved instructed him to contact the Love Field officer and instruct him to pick up the escort at the entrance to Love Field and lead it to the President's plane. He asked if I was going to escort the president's body back to Love Field and I told

him that I did not know. I then looked for the agent to tell him that everything was set and was unable to locate him so I went back to the door to the Emergency Room.

Shortly some officer walked up and told me they are taking the President out of the other door come on he said. I walked outside just as they were putting the casket into the Hearse. Someone said "Jackson a secret service agent is looking for you" Sergeant _____ asked me if I was going to escort the body to Love Field I said I don't know about that time the agent walked up and asked if I had arranged for the escort and I said "yes I'm ready to go when you are." Officer _____ asked me if I wanted him to go with me and I said yes and turned to Sergeant _____ and told him that _____ and I were going to make escort to Love Field with that we left. As chief's car pulled out in front of us until we got onto Hines Blvd. then he motioned for us to take the lead. We did and made a usual funeral escort, using only red lights and whistle to clear traffic to Love Field.

Where the president was placed back on Air Force One.